

# **“Can God Forget?!”**

## **Jeremiah 31:31-34**

**Intro.** – During the early part of 1980 election year, Omaha, Nebraska was voting on ½ cent sales tax increase. The mayor of Omaha, Albert (Al) Veys, recorded a telephone message urging his constituents to vote in favor of this proposed tax increase. This recording was put on a device that would automatically dial a number from Omaha’s directory. Whoever answered would hear the Mayor’s voice urging them to vote in favor of this new tax. Each night the machine was turned off at 9 PM. One night, however, it was not. Omaha was awoken one phone call after another all night long with His Honor’s cheerful voice saying, “Hello, I’m Mayor Veys. I’d like to talk with you about the proposed tax increase...”

It’s not too hard to imagine the reaction of those who were woken up in the middle of the night with this phone call... Nor is it too hard to imagine the person in charge of turning this machine off just plain forgot! Without exception, each of us have had similar embarrassing situations simply because of forgetfulness. Thus, the thought of forgetfulness on our part is all too familiar/common.

But what about the thought of forgetfulness on God’s part? Can God forget? To suggest such an idea almost smacks of irreverence/blasphemy. We think of forgetfulness as peculiar only to ourselves. We think of it as a purely human characteristic and certainly not as being an attribute of God.

*Purpose: to better show how thankful we ought to be that God can forget*

Yes, God does forget, but, His forgetfulness in no way resembles ours. Jeremiah speaks of this *forgetfulness and forgiving* on the basis of a new covenant. This new covenant enables God to do something most would never dream possible:

### **I WHO Often Forget?**

#### **A. We Often Forget Names and Faces**

1. How often have you met someone, recognized them etc., but you can’t think of their name...
2. What makes this worse, we try to cover up... “How are ya... Everything going well...” etc.
  - a. Illus. – Roy Weece met friend on street and drew a blank on his name. Finally asked, “How do you spell your last name again? With a stunned look on his face he said, “J-O-N-E-S”
  - b. Illus. – heard a similar account where the one asked, “Do you spell your last name with an I or an E?” The person responded indignantly, “With an “I.” H-I-L-L!”
3. This of all things causes much embarrassment to forget someone’s face and name.

#### **B. We Forget Our Promises**

1. How many times have and do we promise to do something but simply forget
  - Illus. – when I forgot I had a funeral for the father of a good brother in the Lord...
2. How many times do we make promises to our kids and simply forget...
3. How many times have we forgotten a commitment – to a prearranged meeting... or to a task...?
4. Fact remains, we often forget some of our most important promises... even those to ourselves...

#### **C. We Forget Those We Love**

- Illus. – writer witnessed the following: Train unloading. Saw a pail, frail and weak boy. The little boy had lost one leg. When taken from the train he looked around anxiously as if searching for a familiar face. He evidently was expecting someone who was not there. The train’s steward placed two crutches under the boy’s arms and stood him against the wall. The writer said the last sight he saw as the train pulled away was this little boy standing alone and forgotten.
  1. Use this to illustrate how thoughtless and cruel it is to forget a loved one.
  2. We have parents looking for attention... wives looking for appreciation... kids looking for approval... and husbands looking for thoughtfulness...
  3. In many of such cases we may not have meant to be cruel; nevertheless, because of forgetfulness we all have hurt loved ones...

#### **D. We Forget God**

1. We forget Him in whose hands our very breath lies...
2. We forget the God who came in flesh and dwelt among us, was rejected and placed on a Cross...
  - knowing how prone we are to forgetfulness is the reason behind His Table each Sunday...
3. In summary, in a strictly scientific sense, we are suppose to never forget anything/one... Safe to say for all practical purposes we forget all things we ought not!

But what of God? Does He forget? The thought horrifies us, but, His forgetfulness is of such nature it is the mother of hope. This is true not because God can forget, but, because of what He forgets!

## II WHAT Does God Forget?

- again, this is best understood in what God does NOT forget
- A. God Never Forgets His Universe
    1. With a million plus solar systems to look after, and stars as numerous as the sands of the seas... God never forgets!
    2. He forgets not the world we live in... He grows not weary or too busy to forget the setting/rising of the sun, evening dews, the changing seasons and other phenomenal things that happen daily...
    3. Simply put – God doesn't forget His creation!
  - B. God Never Forgets a Single Child
    1. He who remembers to clothe the lilies, Who takes note when a sparrow dies and counts the hairs on our heads = doesn't forget you, me or anyone else!
      - a. we may be forgetful of Him... but, be assured He is thinking of us all the time.
      - b. friends may forget us, our dogs may waver, but not God
      - c. He knows where we work, live, recreate... He hasn't lost our address... no one off His radar...
    2. How we need to remind each other of this grand truth:
      - in the eyes of the world we don't individually count for much... but with God you count, I count, everybody counts!
    3. Illus. – In crossing the Alps, Napoleon's army had a drummer boy who lost his footing and fell into a chasm. The snow cushioned his fall, but the cliffs were too steep and high for him to climb out. The drummer boy began to frantically beat on his drum to summon his comrades. They all heard the drum and were eager to help, but none dared to do so without permission. Such never came. When the lad realized he was going to be left behind, he began beating his own death march. Hardened soldiers were sobbing like little children. Napoleon, however was unmoved. He was too busy conquering the world to pay any attention to a clumsy, insignificant drummer boy.
    4. How thankful we ought to be that our Lord is the exact opposite of this – He doesn't forget those who lose their footing, who are wounded, broken hearted and afflicted.
      - a. in short, God remembers the last and the least of us
      - b. God remembers the fine points of our lives – a fact we ought to hug to our hearts daily!

An even greater fact is that which God does forget -- the one thing we desire for Him to forget – our sins

## III WHEN Does God Forget?

- when does God forget our sins?
- A. He Cannot Forgive All Sinners (Sin)
    1. There's a dark record being held against most today...
    2. These are the ones who make it impossible for God to forgive and forget their sins. Why? Because they continuously refuse His grace!
  - B. When God Forgives/Forgets Sin
    1. When His gift of grace is received on His terms!
    2. God desires that none would perish (2 Peter 3:9) – anxious to welcome home the lost son...
    3. How can God do this – through the blood of Christ...
      - a. how? Through repentance and faith... confession of that faith...
      - b. when? At baptism into Christ

4. God is so eager to forgive and forget our sins;
  - a. He does this not because He shuts His eyes to the fact we all have sinned...
  - b. He forgives and forgets our sin because they are covered by the blood of Christ...

What a glorious message = Our God can forget!!

**Conclusion:** One last summary to this glorious thought. There's not a soul here who hasn't been wronged, offended or hurt by another. Whether the hurt was intentional or not the hurt remains real. To forgive is Christ-like... But what about forgetting? Can we forget? Paradoxical that it is, the things we often want to remember we forget, the things we want to forget we remember. Here is my point. We struggle with forgiving, but, even more with forgetting. I believe this is something we will never totally master until we shall see Him face to face! Meanwhile, how we need to give thanks and recognize our God not only want and can forgive, but, He also forgets!